

DOLL ACTIVITIES OF A SELECTED GROUP  
OF YOUNG CHILDREN

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Play has different meanings to different people. To a parent play may mean only a source of enjoyment for a child or a way to keep him busy. To a psychologist it provides a way for analyzing the child's personality and measuring his behavior. To a teacher play is a way to increase the child's interest in his studies. To a philosopher play is a kind of ladder by which a child's moral and social development progresses.

The various attitudes toward play show that the word "play" has no strict definition but is widely accepted as a pleasurable experience for a child. It can be said that any exercise or occupation for amusement is play for youngsters. Even this definition does not seem adequate because it has been pointed out that play means something more than mere pleasure. It is the child's way of learning and development. Through play activities, the child learns to do many things and acquires skills that prove useful to him throughout life. Many a woman's skill in sewing was begun when, as a child, she wanted to make clothes for her dolls. Many boys have become football players because they were interested in football in their childhood. Kepler (1952, p. 5) stated: "Play activities provide him with his most dynamic experiences and opportunities

for learning. The right play material, provided in the right way at the right time, has the best effect on the development of the child's body, mind and soul."

Varieties of play activities are important in order that youngsters develop normal personalities. Each kind of play has its own value. Physical play activities help the youngster develop skills and exercise large muscles. Such activities also strengthen the neuro-muscular coordination which improves manipulative abilities. Through social play activities, children learn to get along with other children, to share their possessions, to be fair and play by the rules of the game, to cooperate, and wait their turn. Dramatic play with blocks, puppets, and dolls helps the child to develop his mental and imaginative power. He explores new ideas through the use of these materials. Water play, sand play, paints and clay also allow the child to be creative with his hands and his mind.

If he lacks these play opportunities a child may be poorly adjusted in his social life and in turn display serious personality defects. Rogers (1930, p. 12) stated that "if wholesome recreation is not provided, undesirable outlets for the play tendency will be sought. These undesirable substitutes may take the form of excessive daydreaming or other indulgence of the imagination."

He also pointed out that fifty years ago, families generally lived in rural areas. A child had enough space to run, jump, skip, and to play push and pull games. He was out in the open air with freedom to see the surrounding natural beauty, to climb hills and swim in rivers and streams.

There were relatives close enough to visit without parental accompaniment. For these reasons, parents had fewer responsibilities in planning a child's out-of-doors play. Today a child has less space for outdoor play as well as for indoor games. Houses are small and overcrowded, and even in small towns it is hard to find a playground within a short distance. In this present time a child has difficulty in planning his own play activities. There is very little chance to explore, to create, to wonder. The child misses many opportunities for development.

Since play is one of the basic activities for the preschool child, it is of utmost importance to provide the best opportunities and facilities for the child. The committee on Recreation and Physical Education of the Preschool Child (1930, p. 12) made the following statement about the seriousness of play in the preschool age: "His play is the formative element of the early period, producing independence, self-direction, and joy of accomplishment. To the preschool child play is serious and is as necessary for healthy development as are food and rest. It is the means of getting acquainted with and adjusted to his surroundings." During the third White House Conference (1930, p. 45) President Hoover summarized the value of play by stating: "For play is growth and growth is play."

Many books and articles have been written concerning children and play and ways to stimulate play activities. Although dolls are popular and believed to be beneficial in developing the child's personality, only a small amount of

research has been directed to this form of play. Hall (1919) stated that dolls are a means of self-education for a child. A child learns many things as he feeds, bathes, dresses and undresses a doll. Johl (1911, p. 279-280) also emphasized the importance of dolls when he said "it is an established fact that dolls are loved and cherished the world over. The doll furnishes the stimulus, and helps to bring into play the various emotions which aid in developing a sense of devotion, of authority, and responsibility." Investigations have been made in the areas of art activities and block play, both of which have been used in testing the child's mental and imaginative ability. Farrell (1957) studied sex differences in relation to block play. He also investigated how children use blocks in play. While some research has been done in the area of doll play as a means of studying personality development, there appears to be little published information on how children acquire and use dolls, or how dolls are selected. The present study was undertaken to add to information at these points.

The purposes of the study were:

- (1) To discover the number and kinds of dolls children have and the ways in which they use dolls.
- (2) To discover the methods used to choose and receive dolls.
- (3) To discover whether sex has an effect on doll play.
- (4) To discover whether age has an effect on doll play.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### History

The word doll might have come from a Greek word which meant "idol" or the Latin word "pupa" which is the same as the English word "puppet." There is also a famous story that about a thousand years ago the maid servants were called by the name of "deul" which meant "a doll." Another story is that long ago, when saints were not too familiar to children, Saint Dorothea was very famous and popular, so her name was considered the luckiest name for a girl. After a time, the nickname became "doll" or "dolly." Freeman (1942) indicated that one of the first English references to the word doll was found in Gentlemen's Magazine in 1751.

Leslie Daiken (1953) in his book Children's Toys Throughout the Ages presented an interesting history of the uses of dolls in various parts of the world. There was a time when dolls had absolutely no association with children's toys. Dolls were for adults, especially for men, rather than for children. Dolls were used to represent the culture of the country, and were objects of magico-religious significance. For example, in Egypt clay figures were buried with their masters. The purpose of this was that clay figures would

serve them after death as well as in this life. Egyptians called them "answerers" because they were to answer the call of their master or mistress. Dolls were worshipped in Japan as a token of the ancestor's memory. Islam religion even today does not permit dolls with heads because the Koran (Holy book of Moslem) forbids anything being made to represent the body (deLemos, 1949). In some parts of Africa, a doll was supposed to keep the evil spirits away. Some doll figures were believed to have specific god-head attributes. They were set up on shrines and altars for religious purposes. Others were used in cult-worship. In Hindu religious practices god-heroes were made to resemble doll figures. Some dolls were used to express the belief in procreation and the affirmation of eternal life. As the civilization progressed, certain customs vanished and were replaced by other forms of the objects. Dolls which were placed over shrines were given to children and so, by natural process, became playthings for them. It was the Greeks who used dolls for children's play 2000 years ago. After that Roman girls also used dolls in their play.

According to Freeman (1942) before the 19th century most dolls were made of wood. The earliest known specimen of a wooden doll came from an Egyptian tomb of 3000 B.C. It had a lifelike carved head with hair, but the lower parts of the figure were barely existent. Some wooden dolls with jointed arms were also found in the ruins of ancient Egypt. A few centuries later (the exact date is not known) jointed wooden dolls were found in Greece which contrasted with the

Egyptian doll. In Greece wooden figures lacked arms, while legs were made movable.

In 1700 (Rottger, 1961), wooden dolls with painted features and painted clothes were made in Germany. In 1722, wax was used to secure the hair. Length of dolls varied from eight to twenty-seven inches. By 1800, the joints were more movable and carving more lifelike.

Freeman (1942) stated that in the latter part of the 18th century and early part of the 19th century, wooden dolls were improved. They had wooden heads, stuffed bodies, and unjointed limbs, either of wood or cloth.

Cloth or rag dolls were also commonly found. In fact, rag dolls which were made with linen bodies stuffed with papyrus have been found in Egyptian tombs (Bennett, 1948). In Colonial America rag dolls were very common. Sampson (1935) said that though these dolls were often not beautiful to see, they were very soft and had a cuddling quality. Rag dolls were dressed in long skirts printed with bright-colored flowers.

The oldest doll of Colonial America was the corn-husk doll (Freeman, 1942). It was made with a corn husk folded over the cob and tied to make the head. Corn silk was used for hair and features were painted on the cob. By 1850 wax dolls had become common. The story goes that long ago a prince was lost. There was no photography system at that time, so artists produced a doll in the shape of a prince in order that the people could remember him (Fawcett, 1952). The idea came to the artists that portraits could be made very well

with wax.

In Germany features were painted directly on wax and the body was covered with fine muslin. In England, the quality and shape improved and a method was developed for embedding hair, strand by strand, into the wax with a hot needle (Vonboein, 1932). In France, wax dolls were beautifully dressed with many hair styles and fashionable costumes. They were exported to other European countries and to America as fashion dolls. This was discontinued in the 19th century when France began to publicize fashion in books and albums. In Germany, doll heads were made from thin layers of wax (Zella, 1951). Glass eyes were closed by a control string which passed through the body.

In 1895 paper dolls were in great fashion. Fawcett (1962) described them as varied in hair and eye color, and dressed in long gowns, shoes and stockings.

Parker (1959) stated that in the beginning of the 20th century when arts and crafts were introduced in the school curriculum, children used paper in large quantities for handcrafts. At this time paper was utilized for toy making and paper dolls were made in school by younger children. To give shape to arms and legs, plastic wire and strips of paper were wound ribbonwise. Costumes were made of crepe paper, and buttons, belts, and accessories were cut out of stiff paper. Eyes, nose and mouth were shiny clippings of paper. Kahl(1935) stated that bag dolls in which a small bag stuffed with newspaper was used for the face and a large one for the body were made. Facial features were sewed in place, and the dolls

were dressed with paper scarves and dresses.

In 1904 metal-headed dolls were found on the market (Fawcett, 1962). The common name was "Minerva Knockabout Dolls." They had strong bodies and hands, and their dresses were closed with hooks. Along with metal dolls came the wire dolls.

In the beginning of the 20th century (Magill, 1937), wire dolls were used in school for costume work and elementary grades. Wire dolls were inexpensive and easy to make. Feet were made with plaster of Paris. Flock(1940) said that the body of a wire doll was padded with cotton and covered with flesh-colored muslin.

In 1909 a new kind of doll called Billiken was introduced on the market (Fawcett, 1962). Some people used it as a good luck charm because in China, Billiken, or Joss, was the god of Utopia with a happy smile. The Billiken doll had a smile on its face and wore only a small round cap. It was so popular that a year later sister Billiken appeared for sale. The difference between them was that sister had natural hair.

A doll possessing a combination of two features was introduced (Fawcett, 1962). For example, by turning a skirted doll upside down, a bear would appear. Sometimes the doll represented two combinations of a human doll, one Negro and one white, or a crying and a laughing baby. The bear and human combination was one of the most popular toys in 1907.

Later, in 1909-10, the Roly Poly Dolls with music inside their bodies were manufactured. The Roly Poly Doll had

a head and round body weighted so that when bounced over it regained an upright position. Bodies of Roly Poly Dolls were painted to represent different characters and nationalities.

The present century is famous for mascot dolls which appear on the market in the form of people and animals. Dolls of other shapes are also made to relate to nursery tales such as Humpty Dumpty and Alice through the Looking Glass. Today America has taken a leading place in doll manufacture and some of these can say "mama" and "papa." The jumping jack and celluloid dolls and the Teddy Bear are all ancestors of today's dolls.

The first doll that came to America was presented to a little Virginia Indian girl in 1585 by William Penn, belonging to the expedition of Sir Walter Raleigh to the Roanoke Islands. That doll is still present in Montgomery County, Maryland, in good condition, wearing a court costume. However, dolls did not appear on the consumer's market until the late 19th century. The dolls of 1886 had patent "indestructible" heads (heavy composition) with a smooth finish attempting to imitate wax (Fawcett, 1962). These dolls had flowing hair, well-defined eyes and ears, and were about sixteen inches to twenty-one inches tall. They were dressed in various ways, from elaborate to servant costumes.

The modern trend is toward talking and walking dolls. Though these dolls are quite expensive, still they are in great demand. For example, Chatty Cathy dolls can say many different sentences, as "I am Chatty Cathy. I can really talk. I love you." This doll has moveable head, arms, legs,

and rooted hair and is eighteen inches tall. Chatty Baby is smaller than Cathy and represents her baby. She can also talk: "I am Chatty Baby. I cry. I laugh. I talk. Go Bye-Bye." Chatty Baby can also laugh and cry and has lifelike eyes; brushable, rooted hair; movable head, arms and legs and is twelve inches tall.

Barbie and Ken dolls are very popular. They are very beautiful to look at, especially famous for pretty costumes. The clothes have tiny zippers which actually work, and coats with linings. Barbie and Ken dolls represent the teen-agers' fashions. They are made of Vinyl plastic with movable head, arms and legs and natural hair color. They are about eleven and a half inches tall. Hungriette doll can actually be fed. It is fully jointed and washable. There is a back cavity which opens for easy cleaning.

New dolls appear on the market often. One of the latest is Pebble Flintstone, who is the daughter of the Flintstones, a television family of the Stone Age. The doll was ready for the market before Pebble made her first appearance in the Flintstone Show. The doll industry took advantage of the opportunity which the show offered for publicity. Now Pebble Flintstone, a cute little girl with a ponytail, will take her place alongside Chatty Cathy, Barbie, Ken and the others.

#### Research

The research related to doll play is concerned largely with ways in which doll play techniques have been used to discover children's personality characteristics.

Durret (1959) explored the relationship of early infant regulation and its effect on later aggressive behavior through two doll play sessions. Sixty children four to six years old with their mothers served as subjects. Each child was observed twice in twenty-minute play sessions. Behaviors indicating physical aggression and verbal aggression were recorded. Mothers were asked to rate themselves on five scales; one scale concerned feeding schedule; two concerned toilet training; two rated discipline.

It was discovered that there was no relationship between aggressive behavior and early regulation measures. Boys showed a higher percentage of physical aggression than girls but girls showed a significantly higher percentage of verbal aggression than did boys.

Levin and Sears (1956) studied identification with parents as a determinant of doll aggression. Subjects were 240 five-year-olds and their mothers. These investigators determined the degree of the child's identification with parents, severity with which aggression was punished, and which parent did the punishing. The frequency of aggression was measured in two sessions of doll play with each child. The investigators found that boys who were highly identified with as well as usually punished by their fathers showed the highest frequency of aggression. Identification with mothers was related to high aggression in girls only when it was associated with severe punishment by mothers. Totally, boys were more aggressive than girls.

Other investigators have studied the behavior of children in doll play situations. Philips (1945) investigated doll play as a function of the realism of the material and the length of the experimental session. The high-realism materials were a set of miniature real-life house furnishings and five clothed dolls. The low-realism materials consisted of a set of ambiguous blocklike toy furniture constructed crudely. The dolls were sexless, undressed stuffed bodies with arms, legs and head. The two durations used were twenty minutes and one hour. Results were recorded by observation.

There was relatively more manipulation of toys (exploratory) and less organizational behavior with high-realism materials. Opposite relations were obtained with low-realism materials. Stereotyped-thematic play and exploratory behavior decreased from first to third session, but both aggression and non-relative action (irrelevant) increased during this time.

Pintler (1945) designed a study to isolate and control the variable of experimenter-interaction with the child and to discover the effect of varying the amount of such interaction. His investigation also dealt with effects of presenting the play materials in an organized or unorganized fashion. Forty preschool children at two age levels took part in three twenty-minute play sessions with varying amounts of experimentation-interaction. Interaction did not affect exploratory activities, non-relative behavior or stereotyped-thematic play. An organized setting of material

caused a greater amount of organizational behavior. The greater the amount of interaction, the greater the amount of aggression, theme changes, and non-stereotyped-thematic play.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

Subjects of the study were twenty-five preschool children enrolled in Kansas State University Child Development Laboratory. They ranged in age from two years, eight months to five years. The median age was four years.

On October 15, 1962, thirty-nine questionnaires (see Appendix, p. 36) were sent to the parents of the children enrolled in the Child Development Laboratory. A face letter (see Appendix, p. 35) explaining the purpose was sent with the questionnaire. Parents were asked to observe the child for about one week before completing the last part of the questionnaire.

Thirty-one questionnaires, completed by the mothers, were returned. Eight mothers did not reply.

The thirty-one children were divided into two groups according to age level. Ages of the older group ranged from three years, two months to five years. Ages of the younger group were two years, eight months, to three years, one month. There were sixteen boys and fifteen girls.

Six of the returned questionnaires reported that the children did not have dolls but had stuffed animals. Since stuffed animals were not discussed in this study, the questionnaires from twenty-five mothers were tabulated and

analyzed. Table 1 shows the division of children according to age and sex.

TABLE 1  
AGE RANGE OF SUBJECTS

SS	N	Older group: 3 years, 2 months to 5 years	Younger group: 2 years, 8 months to 3 years
Boys	10	6	4
Girls	15	10	5

No statistical tests were made because of the small number of children and because of the exploratory nature of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Number and Types of Dolls

The first purpose of this study was to find the number and type of dolls possessed by children. There was wide variation in both. The number of dolls possessed by children ranged from none to twenty-five as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
NUMBER OF DOLLS POSSESSED BY CHILDREN

Ss	N	0	1	2-3	4-7	More than 7
Older boys	11	5	2	3	1	0
Younger boys	5	1	1	2	1	0
Older girls	10	0	0	0	6	4
Younger girls	5	0	0	0	3	2

Two boys, one older, one younger, reported four dolls, the maximum number among the boys. Six of the boys had no dolls. Every girl had at least four dolls. The highest number, twenty-five, was reported for a girl in the younger group.

Girls had a greater total number of dolls than boys. The ten boys had twenty-three dolls while fifteen girls had 115 dolls. This is an average of 2.3 dolls per boy and 7.6 per girl. If

the six boys who had no dolls are taken into consideration, the average number of dolls per boy falls to 1.4.

Mothers were asked to classify the dolls according to type: baby, boy, girl, adult male and adult female. Table 3 presents this tabulation.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF DOLLS OF VARIOUS TYPES POSSESSED BY CHILDREN

Ss	N	Baby doll	Child boy doll	Child girl doll	Adult male doll	Adult female doll
Boys	10	10	10	1	2	0
Girls	15	50	5	48	1	11

While boys averaged only one baby doll each, girls averaged three and one-third such dolls. Each boy averaged one boy doll while fifteen girls averaged only one-third boy doll. On the other hand, each girl averaged three little girl dolls while the ten boys had only one among them. Only three adult male dolls were reported, two belonging to boys and one to a girl. There was a different picture in relation to adult female dolls. Eleven such dolls were reported, all belonging to girls.

The relation between sex and doll types was also noticeable. Six out of ten boys possessed at least one baby doll, while this was true for fourteen out of fifteen girls. Boy dolls were possessed by 80 per cent of the boys; however, only 30 per cent of the girls had such a doll. While thirteen girls had girl dolls, only one boy was reported to have a girl doll. Few adult dolls

were reported, yet it is interesting to note that while seven girls had lady dolls, no boys did. These findings are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4

## NUMBER OF CHILDREN POSSESSING DOLLS OF VARIOUS TYPES

Ss	N	Baby doll	Child boy doll	Child girl doll	Adult male doll	Adult female doll
Boys	10	6	8	1	2	0
Girls	15	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	5	13	1	7

Boys seemed to be more concerned about giving names to their dolls than girls. Four boys had named all of their dolls, only one girl had given names to all of her dolls, while the other girls had named a few dolls. On the whole, children did not seem very particular about names. Out of twenty-five children only five had names for all dolls while others reported a few dolls named.

Five older girls changed their dolls' names according to play activities.

Description of Oldest, Newest and Favorite Dolls

Mothers were asked to describe the oldest, newest and favorite dolls of the children. The age of the "oldest doll" ranged from two months to four years. (This question was not answered by the mother of one older boy.) Only two boys had a doll as long as two and one-half years, while eleven girls had dolls two and one-half years or longer. Only four "oldest dolls"

belonging to girls were less than two and one-half years old.

One "oldest doll" belonging to an older boy was two months old, while minimum age among the girls' dolls was two years. Age range for the "oldest doll" was two months to four years. Table 5 shows the age of "oldest dolls."

TABLE 5

## LENGTH OF TIME "OLDEST DOLL" IN CHILD'S POSSESSION

Ss	N	Range of time of possession (in months)	Less than 7 months	7-30 months	36-48 months
Boys	9	2-30	2	7	0
Girls	15	24-48	0	7	8

Age of "newest dolls" ranged from two days to two years and is presented in Table 6. Two boys, one older, one younger, did not answer this question. One younger girl had the "newest doll" two days which was the minimum age for the "newest dolls." The maximum age of a "newest doll" was two years. This doll was possessed by a younger boy.

TABLE 6

## LENGTH OF TIME "NEWEST DOLL" IN CHILD'S POSSESSION

Ss	N	Range of time of possession (in months)	Less than 1 mo.	2-6 mos.	7-12 mos.	More than 12 mos.
Boys	8	2-24	0	3	3	2
Girls	15	1/2-12	3	5	7	0

The occasion on which the dolls were acquired is also interesting. This information in relation to the "oldest doll" is presented in Table 7; in relation to the "newest doll", in Table 8.

TABLE 7  
OCCASION ON WHICH "OLDEST DOLLS" WERE RECEIVED

Ss	N	Birthday	Christmas	No special occasion
Older boys	6	1	3	2
Younger boys	4	0	1	3
Older girls	10	0	8	2
Younger girls	5	0	2	3

Christmas was the favorite doll-receiving time, since 56 per cent of the children received the "oldest doll" at this time. Only one boy received the "oldest doll" on his birthday. However, the picture changes in relation to the newest doll. Thirty per cent of the children received the "newest doll" on a birthday and 44 per cent acquired the "newest doll" on no special occasion.

TABLE 8  
OCCASION ON WHICH "NEWEST DOLLS" WERE RECEIVED

Ss	N	Birthday	Christmas	No special occesion
Older boys	6	1	0	3
Younger boys	4	0	1	2
Older girls	10	2	3	5
Younger girls	5	2	2	1

The question of where dolls came from was also important. Six boys and five girls received the "oldest doll" from their parents. Two-thirds of the girls received the "oldest doll" from grandparents, relatives or friends, while only slightly more than one-third of the boys received such gifts. Among the "newest dolls" only five boys and four girls received their "newest doll" from parents. One older boy bought a doll for himself. Among the boys, two-fifths received the "newest doll" from relatives, while more than two-thirds of the girls received the "newest doll" from relatives.

Most of the children were pleased to have the dolls. Only one boy was reported to dislike a doll.

In this group doll purchases were evidently not influenced by children's request for particular kinds of dolls. Only one boy and five girls had made specific requests for the "newest doll" and these children had actually helped with the selection. The "oldest doll" was specifically requested by only one girl, who selected it as well.

Three children knew the trade names of their "oldest doll" and three other children knew the trade names of the "newest doll." The trade names which were known by the children were: Barbie doll, Chatty Cathy doll, Nity-Nite doll, Raggedy-Andy doll, Tiny Tears doll, Teen-age doll.

Upon comparison of the characteristics of the "oldest doll" and the "newest doll", as shown in Table 9, it appeared that "newest dolls" had more movable body parts and real hair than the "oldest dolls".

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF CHARACTERISTICS OF  
"OLDEST AND "NEWEST" DOLLS

Dolls	N	Hair	Movable legs	Movable head	Movable eyes	Removable clothes
"Oldest doll"	25	3	11	10	9	14
"Newest doll"	23	15	17	19	16	18

Among "oldest dolls" baby dolls were more common, while among "newest dolls" child dolls were more popular. No parent reported an adult doll as the "oldest doll", while parents of four girls reported adult dolls as "newest doll". Ten children had a rag doll as "oldest doll"; older children had more rag dolls than younger.

Among "oldest dolls", no doll had the ability to walk or talk, while among "newest dolls" four could walk and three could talk. Six "oldest dolls" had the ability of wetting and four "newest dolls" could do the same.

Mothers were asked the kind of doll which was the child's favorite doll. Eight children chose baby dolls, four children chose rag dolls, three chose adult dolls and four children chose a boy doll as favorite. Boys more than girls had rag dolls as their favorite doll. Girls had more child and adult dolls as favorites than did boys.

For six children it was reported that the "oldest doll" was the favorite doll. For ten children the "newest doll" was the favorite doll.

Use of Dolls

Mothers were asked to report where their children used dolls most of the time and where dolls were kept. Most of the children used dolls in the living and dining rooms but for the most part dolls were kept in the children's own rooms. Only two children used dolls in the basement. Six children had no special place for doll play and three had no particular place to keep the dolls and doll equipment. Five children used the kitchen as a play area.

Mothers were asked to observe the role which their children assigned to the dolls. In only three cases the role of mother was assigned to the doll and in no case was the doll given a father role. Three boys assigned the role of child, while nine girls placed dolls in child roles. Almost all children used the dolls as babies. No child ever pretended that a doll was store-keeper, story teller, policeman or doctor. One girl pretended her doll was a fireman. Four older boys and four older girls used dolls as book, movie or TV characters.

Each mother was asked to observe the child's play for a week and then to check the kinds of activities she had seen. Activities were grouped under four main headings: (1) sickness, (2) routines, (3) affection, (4) punishment. Under sickness were such items as : doll taken to hospital, doctor, dentist; doll being cared for while sick. Items included in routines were: doll being washed, bathed, dressed, undressed, fed, put to bed. Under general topic of affection were such items as:

doll being talked to, rocked, read to, pushed in buggy, and being made ready for company. Items included under the fourth heading were: doll being abused, put in jail, punished.

Table 10 presents a resume' of the activities in which the children engaged.

TABLE 10

NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENGAGED IN VARIOUS ACTIVITIES WITH DOLLS

Ss	N	Sickness	Routines	Affection	Punishment
Boys	10	3	7	8	1
Girls	15	11	14	15	8

There appears to be a large variation in both sickness and punishment. According to the report, 73 per cent of the girls engaged in activities dealing with sickness, while 30 per cent of the boys engaged in such activities. Only 10 per cent of the boys ever punished the dolls, while 53 per cent of the girls punished their dolls. There was not as great a difference between boys and girls in connection with routines or affection. All girls showed affection in some way, and 80 per cent of the boys engaged in these activities. Ninety-five per cent of the girls carried out routines in connection with their dolls, while 70 per cent of the boys used dolls in the same manner.

A larger number of activities was reported for girls than for boys. This tabulation is presented in Table 11.

It is interesting to note that for each girl 7.8 activities with dolls were reported, while only 3.5 activities were reported

TABLE 11

NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY CHILDREN WITH DOLLS

Ss	N	Sickness	Routines	Affection	Punishment
Boys	10	4	16	14	1
Girls	15	17	54	36	8

per boy. Only one out of nine of the punishment activities was carried out by a boy, while eight were carried out by girls. Boys carried out 27 per cent of the total activities dealing with Affection, while 73 per cent of such activities were carried out by girls. Boys were responsible for only one-fourth of the activities included in sickness. Ninety per cent of the total routine activities were carried out by girls.

To state the findings in another manner, the average number of activities per child can be set forth. Table 12 presents the analysis and highlights the larger activities.

TABLE 12

AVERAGE NUMBER ACTIVITIES PER CHILD

Ss	N	Sickness	Routines	Affection	Punishment	Total
Boys	10	.4	1.6	1.4	.1	3.5
Girls	15	1.13	3.6	2.53	.53	7.8

Attitudes About Doll Play

Mothers were asked to state their attitude toward doll play

for boys and girls. They were also asked to state their opinion of the feeling of fathers about doll play for boys and girls.

Mothers reported that they either feel approval or no concern toward their sons using dolls. No mother disapproved of boys who did not play with dolls, but four mothers disapproved of daughters who did not use dolls in their play. Seventeen mothers were unconcerned about daughters using dolls in their play.

Mothers reported that fathers were unconcerned about whether or not daughters play with dolls. Two fathers disapproved of boys playing with dolls, but six fathers approved of boys playing with dolls.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Mothers of the thirty-one preschool children enrolled in Kansas State University Development Laboratory were asked to fill out a questionnaire concerning the doll play of their children. The questionnaires, along with face letters explaining the purposes of the study, were sent to thirty-nine families, thirty-one of which were returned. Mothers were asked to observe the child one week in order to fill out the last part of the questionnaire (see Appendix). Six children did not have dolls but had stuffed animals. Therefore, twenty-five children, fifteen girls and ten boys, were analyzed in this report.

This age was particularly chosen because this is the age when a child moves rapidly toward independence. He is curious and eager about new things. He moves about and discovers things for himself. He not only can think thoughts but he is able to express what he thinks. He is imaginative, creative and dramatic (Hurlock, 1944). Imaginative and dramatic play activities are quite common at the preschool age level. Stone and Church (1957) point out that the preschool child has in effect two ways of getting to know his world: he can interact with it, or he can act it-- in other words, be it. As the child starts to become aware of other people with an existence

apart from his own, he tries to comprehend the attitudes and activities of others by putting himself in that situation. At this stage the child tries out concretely by identification what it feels like to be different people and things. In doll play a child may express jealousy of his baby sister or he may reflect the attitudes he believes his mother has taken toward him.

The results of this survey pointed to a certain lack of concern on the part of children toward dolls. Children at this age level did not give names to their dolls nor change the names of dolls according to play activities. Few children were aware of trade names of their dolls. Rather surprising was the fact that even most of the parents did not know the trade names of the dolls. Usually parents selected the dolls or children received them from others as presents. Few children made a request for a particular kind of doll but they were reported to be happy to have received the doll.

Girls showed greater interest in dolls than did boys. Girls more than boys played with dolls and girls had a greater number of dolls than did boys. Girls received dolls more often as presents from relatives than did boys. The reason for this may be that generally adults believe a doll is a plaything for a girl rather than a boy.

Some parents wrote notes on the questionnaire explaining that their sons had mechanical toys such as cars and trucks. Some also noted that their sons had stuffed animals rather than dolls. One parent wrote: "My boy plays more with cars, a tricycle, and a tractor than dolls. He is mechanical minded".

Another stated: "His main interest is cars which he carries with him at all times." It was also noted that boys spent much of their time in outside play activities without dolls, while girls spent more time than boys in doll play outdoors as well as indoors.

Children had more baby dolls than any other type of doll. Children possessed more dolls of the same sex than of the opposite sex. Girls had more little girl dolls, while boys had more little boy dolls. Girls had more female adult dolls, while boys had a greater number of male adult dolls. While boys possessed an average of one baby doll each, only one boy had a little girl doll and no adult female dolls were reported for boys. This again points to the culture orientation of toy choice for children. Evidently boy dolls are a bit more acceptable for boys than are girl dolls.

For older children parents bought dolls with more movable body parts than when the child was younger. When the "oldest doll" was compared with the "newest doll", the "newest doll" had many more movable body parts. "Newest dolls" more often had real hair and the ability for walking and talking. Girls more than boys had dolls with movable body parts. Boys had more rag dolls. This may be true because parents feel that boys are not concerned with the detail of a doll, but want something soft and comfortable to touch. On the other hand, adults are likely to feel that girls are interested in trying to copy what their mothers are doing. Adults evidently believe girls want something which looks real.

Children usually give to dolls the roles of baby, child

and mother. No child gave the role of father to a doll. The reason may be that father is out of the home most of the day and mother or female friends are with the child most of the time. The child therefore identifies the doll with those persons he knows very well. More girls placed dolls in child roles than boys. Almost all the children used the doll as a baby. No child even pretended that a doll was a storekeeper, a storyteller, policemen or doctor. A few children gave roles to their dolls of book, movie and television characters.

Most of the children used dolls in living and dining rooms; a few used them in the basement, kitchen and storeroom. Children usually kept their dolls in their rooms.

Girls took part in a greater variety of activities in doll play than did boys. Boys showed more affection and family-routine play than care-during-sickness and punishment play. A greater number of girls also took part in showing affection and family-routine play than other kinds of activities. Mothers marked a great many more activities for girls than for boys.

The nature of the check list was quite general and may not have covered all activities which the mother observed. Also, no time limit was set for the observation. Mothers were instructed to observe the child's doll play for a week and then to complete the questionnaire. Nor were mothers asked to mark the same activity more than once even if such play occurred. Therefore, we can draw no conclusions about the difference between boys and girls in amount of doll play. However, since all mothers made reports following the same instructions,

it is possible to look at the way in which mothers perceived their child's doll play and to note that girls were reported to engage in a greater variety of activities than boys as well as a greater number.

Parents were for the most part unconcerned about the use of dolls by their children. Only four mothers disapproved of daughters not using dolls, and two fathers disapproved of sons using dolls in play.

Dolls were originally for adults rather than for children. For the most part, this has changed and dolls are recognized as toys throughout most of the world. This is certainly true today in American culture where dolls are accepted as "standard equipment" for children. Parents seem to take for granted children's enjoyment of dolls, giving dolls as gifts before children make specific requests for them. Most parents contacted in this study approved their children's use of dolls or else state their lack of concern in this area. This applied to both boys and girls.

Here again the questions were very general, requiring only an affirmative or negative reply. If a more detailed study had been done and mothers had been given opportunities for explanatory answers, they might have given more specific information. For instance, one child earlier in the year came to nursery school holding a large doll by one arm. When the teacher commented on the new doll, the mother volunteered the information that the father had picked the doll out as a birthday present because he thought all little girls should

have dolls. She also stated that the child had shown little interest in the doll until younger siblings had tried to take it over. Since that time she had clung to it possessively.

Even today, however, parents evidently believe that dolls are more suitable for girls than for boys. Girls possessed about five times as many dolls as boys were reported to have. Pointing in the same direction is the fact that relatives possibly felt freer to give dolls as gifts to girls than to boys.

To account for this we must understand that this society makes children aware at an early age of sex differences, particularly in the area of role expectation. By the time children enter nursery school, boys are being given more cars and trucks and fewer dolls. Girls, on the other hand, continue to receive dolls both from parents and relatives. Through play and the use of play equipment children identify with the roles they are expected to play in society. Parents seem to cooperate by providing for girls equipment which will lead them to identify with the roles of wife and care-taker of home and children, and for boys equipment which will lead them to identify with more masculine pursuits.

There is little published material concerning the ways in which children acquire and use dolls, reasons why some activities are more interesting to children than others, and whether or not family background makes any difference in doll play activity. While this report is general in nature, it does raise some questions which might be answered by further study

in this area. If a child repeats the same activity again and again, is there any significant incident behind it? Is there any relation between the child's play at nursery school and at home? It may be that a greater variety of materials at nursery school along with opportunity for interaction with other children playing with dolls may be connected with differences in home play and school play.

What is the effect of type, kind, and number of dolls on the child's play? There may be great differences in the child's play activity when he has a variety of dolls and doll equipment and when he has only a few dolls with little or no equipment. The role to which the doll is assigned may be a result only of the type of doll rather than the child's identification with significant people.

Why and how do parents select dolls for children? While buying a doll is consideration given to the child's interest or do parents choose doll on the basis of their own likes and dislikes? Are such items as price and quality prime factors? Are they influenced by what they think other children have? Do they think it is good for a child to play with dolls? Does care of the doll enter into reasons for selection?

Another area for exploration is the comparison of the child's reaction when he receives a doll from parents, relatives and friends, and when he chooses a doll for himself.

The relation of dolls to the life of a child and his family is perhaps far more complex than may appear on the surface. Dolls represent not only a toy for a child but may also represent the view of the parent toward the role which the child

must be taught to play in society and one of the ways in which this role can be taught.

## APPENDIX

October 5, 1962

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Parents - Friends:

I am a graduate student at Kansas State University and am writing to ask your cooperation in a report on which I am working. The aim of this study is to gather information about children and their dolls. Dr. Stith is my major advisor and has worked with me in planning the project.

The attached questionnaire is being sent to the parents of each child currently enrolled in the Child Development Laboratory. Some items can be checked off quickly; others will take a little more of your time. The information which we ask for in the last section will necessitate your observation of your child at play. You need not keep records, just be aware of how your youngster is using dolls. Please answer each item in relation to your child in nursery school.

As you take an inventory of the dolls your child has, and watch your child at his play, we believe you will profit, too. We will be glad to share with you general information about dolls when we finish the survey.

I would much appreciate it if you will fill out the questionnaire and hand it to Dr. Stith at the Child Development Laboratory. We would like to have it by October 22.

Again thank you for your help.

Very truly yours,

Anwar Khanem

AK:twa

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

## NUMBER AND KIND OF DOLLS:

1. Number of dolls \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Are they named?

All of them \_\_\_\_\_; Most of them \_\_\_\_\_;

Only a few \_\_\_\_\_; None \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Do names of dolls change according to activity? \_\_\_\_\_.

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Describe dolls according to following characteristics:

a. Number baby dolls \_\_\_\_\_; Little girl dolls \_\_\_\_\_;

Little boy dolls \_\_\_\_\_; Adult female dolls \_\_\_\_\_;

Adult male dolls \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Number dolls in special costume: Cowboy \_\_\_\_\_; Bride \_\_\_\_\_;

Clown \_\_\_\_\_; Other nationality \_\_\_\_\_; Novelty \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Description of Oldest doll:

How long has child had doll? \_\_\_\_\_

Size \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

What is the condition of the doll: Good \_\_\_\_\_; Fair \_\_\_\_\_;

Poor \_\_\_\_\_.

On what occasion was it acquired? \_\_\_\_\_

Did child choose it? \_\_\_\_\_

Did child ask for this particular kind of doll? \_\_\_\_\_

What characteristics did child mention in his desire for  
a doll? \_\_\_\_\_

Trade name of doll \_\_\_\_\_

Is child aware of trade name? \_\_\_\_\_

Gift from whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Child's reaction to it \_\_\_\_\_

Check characteristics of doll: "real" hair \_\_\_\_;  
 Movable legs \_\_\_\_; Movable head \_\_\_\_; Movable eyes \_\_\_\_;  
 Removable clothes \_\_\_\_; Baby doll \_\_\_\_; Child doll \_\_\_\_;  
 Adult doll \_\_\_\_; Rag doll \_\_\_\_.

Special abilities: Walking \_\_\_\_; Talking \_\_\_\_; Wetting \_\_\_\_;  
 Dancing \_\_\_\_.

How does the child use the doll? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Description of Newest doll:

How long has child had doll? \_\_\_\_\_

Size \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

What is the condition of the doll: Good \_\_\_\_; Fair \_\_\_\_;  
 Poor \_\_\_\_.

On what occasion was it acquired? \_\_\_\_\_

Did child choose it? \_\_\_\_\_

Did child ask for this particular kind of doll? \_\_\_\_\_

What characteristics did child mention in his desire for  
 a doll? \_\_\_\_\_

Trade name of doll \_\_\_\_\_

Is child aware of trade name? \_\_\_\_\_

Gift from whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Child's reaction to it \_\_\_\_\_

Check characteristics of doll: "Real" hair \_\_\_\_;  
 Movable legs \_\_\_\_; Movable head \_\_\_\_; Movable eyes \_\_\_\_;  
 Removable clothes \_\_\_\_; Baby doll \_\_\_\_; Child doll \_\_\_\_;  
 Adult doll \_\_\_\_; Rag doll \_\_\_\_.

Special abilities: Walking\_\_\_\_; Talking\_\_\_\_; Wetting\_\_\_\_;  
Dancing\_\_\_\_.

How does the child use the doll? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description of Favorite Doll:**

How long has child had doll? \_\_\_\_\_

Size\_\_\_\_\_ Name\_\_\_\_\_

What is the condition of the doll? Good\_\_\_\_; Fair\_\_\_\_;  
Poor\_\_\_\_.

On what occasion was it acquired? \_\_\_\_\_

Did child choose it? \_\_\_\_\_

Did child ask for this particular kind of doll? \_\_\_\_\_

What characteristics did child mention in his desire for  
a doll? \_\_\_\_\_

Trade name of doll \_\_\_\_\_

Is child aware of trade name? \_\_\_\_\_

Gift from whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Child's reaction to it \_\_\_\_\_

Check characteristics of doll: "Real" hair\_\_\_\_;

Movable legs\_\_\_\_; Movable head\_\_\_\_; Movable eyes\_\_\_\_

Removable clothes\_\_\_\_; Baby doll\_\_\_\_; Child doll\_\_\_\_

Adult doll\_\_\_\_; Reg doll\_\_\_\_.

Special abilities: Walking\_\_\_\_; Talking\_\_\_\_; Wetting\_\_\_\_;  
Dancing\_\_\_\_.

How does the child use the doll? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Has child ever asked for a doll?** \_\_\_\_\_

What kind? \_\_\_\_\_

Reaction to it: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Has child ever received a doll he did not request? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind? \_\_\_\_\_

Reaction to it: \_\_\_\_\_

PLACES WHERE AND WAYS IN WHICH DOLLS ARE USED:

1. Where does child play generally: Own room \_\_\_\_\_; Play room \_\_\_\_\_; Living or dining room \_\_\_\_\_; Bedroom share with another \_\_\_\_\_; Kitchen \_\_\_\_\_; Basement \_\_\_\_\_; Other \_\_\_\_\_; No special place \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Where does child keep dolls and other toys? Own room \_\_\_\_\_; Play room \_\_\_\_\_; Living or dining room \_\_\_\_\_; Bedroom share with another \_\_\_\_\_; Kitchen \_\_\_\_\_; Basement \_\_\_\_\_; Other \_\_\_\_\_; No special place \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Where does child play generally with dolls? Own room \_\_\_\_\_; Play room \_\_\_\_\_; Living or dining room \_\_\_\_\_; Bedroom share with another \_\_\_\_\_; Kitchen \_\_\_\_\_; Basement \_\_\_\_\_; Other \_\_\_\_\_; No special place \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Does the child give the doll specific roles to play:  
 Mother \_\_\_\_\_; Daddy \_\_\_\_\_; Child \_\_\_\_\_; Baby \_\_\_\_\_; Neighbor \_\_\_\_\_; Baby-sitter \_\_\_\_\_; Policeman \_\_\_\_\_; Doctor \_\_\_\_\_;  
 Storekeeper \_\_\_\_\_; Firemen \_\_\_\_\_; Nurse \_\_\_\_\_; Story-book characters \_\_\_\_\_; TV characters \_\_\_\_\_; Movies characters \_\_\_\_\_.
5. After a week of general observation, check the following activities you have seen as your child plays with dolls:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sickness: doll sick, being cared for or doctored  
 Doll gets bathed or washed

- Doll contacts the doctor or dentist
- Doll is taken to hospital
- Doll is rescued from burning house or other difficulty \_\_\_\_\_
- Doll is being fed or cooked for: At table \_\_\_\_\_  
From bottle \_\_\_\_\_
- Doll is put to bed
- Doll being punished; how? \_\_\_\_\_
- Doll being dressed or undressed
- Doll is put in jail
- Doll is being made ready for company or is having company
- Doll is rocked, cuddled, loved
- Doll is abused: As a person \_\_\_\_\_; As a thing \_\_\_\_\_
- Doll is pushed in buggy
- Doll is read to
- Doll is talked to

6. In general how do mothers feel about boys who like to play with dolls? Approval \_\_\_\_\_; Disapproval \_\_\_\_\_; Unconcern \_\_\_\_\_; How do fathers feel? Approval \_\_\_\_\_; Disapproval \_\_\_\_\_; Unconcern \_\_\_\_\_.

7. In general how do mothers feel about daughters who do not enjoy dolls? Approval \_\_\_\_\_; Disapproval \_\_\_\_\_; Unconcern \_\_\_\_\_; How do fathers feel? Approval \_\_\_\_\_; Disapproval \_\_\_\_\_; Unconcern \_\_\_\_\_.

8. Approximately how much time per week does your child spend in the following activities? TV and radio \_\_\_\_\_

Outside play \_\_\_\_\_ With dolls \_\_\_\_\_

Without dolls \_\_\_\_\_ Inside play with dolls \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Reading and music \_\_\_\_\_

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DOLL ACTIVITIES OF A SELECTED GROUP  
OF YOUNG CHILDREN

by

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B. Sc., College of Home Economics, Pakistan, 1960

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1963

## AESTRACT

### Purpose

Play is important for the growth of the child. Variety of play activities seems to be important for the normal development of the child's personality. Though dolls are popular and believed to be important to children, little published material is available concerning this. The present study was undertaken to add information at these points:

- (1) To discover the number and types of dolls children have and the way in which they use dolls;
- (2) To discover the methods used to choose and receive dolls;
- (3) To discover whether sex has an effect on doll play;
- (4) To discover whether age has an effect on doll play.

### Procedure

The subjects of the study were thirty-one children of the Kansas State Child Development Laboratory. A questionnaire with face letter was sent to the mothers of these children. Six mothers reported that their children had no doll, but had stuffed animals. Stuffed animals were not discussed in this study. The report is based on the compilation of information concerning ten boys and fifteen girls. Because of the small number of children studied, statistical analysis was not made.

### SUMMARY

Girls had five times as many dolls as did boys. The -

sixteen boys had twenty-three dolls or an average of 1.4 dolls per boy. Fifteen girls had 115 dolls, which was an average of 7.6 per girl.

Almost all the children had at least one baby doll. Boys averaged only one baby doll each, while girls averaged three and a third such dolls. Boys had more little boy and adult male dolls than did girls. Girls had more little girl and adult female dolls than did boys. Girls had more dolls with movable body parts than did boys.

Girls assigned a greater variety of roles to dolls; girls carried out more activities with dolls than did boys. For each girl 7.8 activities were reported, while only 3.5 activities were reported per boy. There were great differences between boys and girls in connection with some activities. Seventy-three per cent of the girls engaged in activities dealing with sickness, while only 30 per cent of the boys engaged in such activities. Only 10 per cent of the boys ever punished their dolls, while 53 per cent of the girls punished their dolls. There was not as great a difference between boys and girls in connection with routine or affection activities.

Few children ever made a request for a particular kind of doll. Children were usually unconcerned about the selection of dolls. It was parents or relatives who bought dolls for children. Christmas was the favorite doll-giving time, since 56 per cent of the children received the "oldest doll" on this occasion. Girls received more dolls from grandparents, other relatives, and friends than from parents. Boys received

more dolls from parents than from relatives.

Parents were usually unconcerned about whether or not the children used dolls in their play.

The following items seemed to be related to the sex of the child: number and types of dolls possessed; number and types of activities in which dolls were used; and the source of the doll.

There seemed to be no relation between the age of the child and any of the variables considered.